



Arizona Department of Agriculture

1688 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-0958 (602) 542-5420

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: February 15, 2007

MEDIA CONTACT: Ed Hermes, 602-542-0958

Company Removes Protected Plants, Pays \$100,000

(Phoenix, AZ) – Arizona Department of Agriculture Director Donald Butler today announced a \$100,000 settlement Agave Environmental Contracting Inc. (AECI) resolving allegations that the Phoenix-based company removed almost 300 Mesquite trees from State Trust Land without first obtaining a permit. The settlement includes the Agriculture Department and the State Land Department.

From about January 2003 to March of 2003 AECI removed 296 Mesquite trees, and then filled the holes left by the missing trees. The removal prompted the State Land Department and Department of Agriculture to take legal action, which resulted in a settlement reached Feb. 12.

According to the settlement, AECI admitted to removing the Mesquite trees without consent, and violating the Arizona Native Plants Act. The Arizona Native Plants Act requires any person wanting to move a protected native plant to first obtain a permit from the Arizona Department of Agriculture. A permit is required whether the protected native plant is on public, private, or state land.

For a full listing of protected native plants please visit www.azda.gov.



Top: State owned Mesquite trees were boxed and sold by Agave Environmental Contracting Inc.

This photo shows the Mesquite trees after they were extracted from state land and brought to private land to be sold.

Bottom: This photo shows the area of State Land once inhabited by Mesquite trees. The holes left by the extraction of the Mesquites were filled by AECL.



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